

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to support the extension of passenger rail service between New York and Atlanta or Birmingham through East Tennessee.

WHEREAS, an internal study of proposed new rail routes, including a new line from New York to Atlanta by way of East Tennessee has been completed; and

WHEREAS, the proposed new route would connect major northeast cities with Atlanta through the eastern Tennessee cities of Bristol, Morristown, Greeneville, Knoxville, Athens, Cleveland and Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, such new line would serve as a logical expansion of Amtrak's national network and would link major population centers in western Virginia and eastern Tennessee with New York and Atlanta; and

WHEREAS, because of declining air and bus service to many of these cities, the new route would provide badly needed transportation access and act as a catalyst to enhance the advancement of employment and economic and community development throughout all of East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail service would provide additional support and increased visibility to such area economic development projects as the 1996 Olympics; and

WHEREAS, passenger rail service would also greatly enhance the growth and expansion of tourism in East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, businesses, industries, chambers of commerce and municipal and county governments in East Tennessee are organizing efforts and making commitments to support the proposed new Amtrak route through the area; and

WHEREAS, these publicated private sector entities have banded together to show their unwavering support for the proposed new route through East Tennessee, and have conducted various public meetings to demonstrate the unity of their support; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NINETY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That this General Assembly endorse the proposal to extend passenger rail service between New York and Atlanta or Birmingham via East Tennessee and urge the United States Congress to support the expansion of such service as part of the proposed New York-Atlanta-Birmingham route.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Department of Transportation and the Department of Economic and Community Development are hereby directed to jointly conduct a needs assessment and feasibility study relative to state government's role in securing and developing the proposed new route through East Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be sent to Mayors and Chambers of Commerce, and Private Industry Councils of Bristol, Morristown, Greeneville, Knoxville, Athens, Cleveland and Chattanooga, and to the Commissioners of Transportation and Economic and Community Development.

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